Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1675 - September 18 2009

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1675 with a release date of Friday, September 18, 2009 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. A Dutch telecommunications regulator may have created a confrontation between ham radio in space and ham radio on the ground. We have the details. Also, a leader in emergency communications says the FCC appears open to suggestions on how to solve the problem of hams working for served agencies to keep their nets on the air, Oregon hams use grant monies to establish a state wide Winlink communications system and NOAA says that Solar Cycle 24 may never get above 90. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1675 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESTRUCTURING: DUTCH GOVERNMENT TRYING TO FORCE D-STAR REPEATERS INTO HAM SATELLITE BAND

A confrontation between amateur satellite users and terrestrial users of D-Star repeaters appears to be looming on the other side of the Atlantic. This because one European telecommunications regulator has decided to make it happen. Norm Seeley, KI7UP, is here with the details:

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A confrontation between amateur satellite users and terrestrial users of D-Star repeaters appears to be looming on the European horizon. This, because the telecommunications regulator in the Netherlands is creating a war-like scenario between the two ham radio interests so that it can proceed with one of its pet technological projects.

Information provided to Amsat-North America indicates what the ham radio space agency calls a growing threat to frequencies allocated and used by the Amateur Satellite Service. This is because the Dutch government has decided to reallocate 439.500 MHz and upward to the Differential Global Positioning Service. And to accomplish this goal it has decided to move the output frequency subband of that nations terrestrial D-Star repeaters from 439 to 440 MHz down to 437 to 438 MHz. This re-allocation would place digital repeater signals right in the downlink band of the Amateur Satellite Service.

Nor are Dutch telecommunications regulators listening to anyone's complaints about the proposed reallocation. Protests from Dutch amateur radio operators, amateur clubs and even telecommunications regulators in nearby countries are falling on what amounts to deaf bureaucratic ears. The regulator is still planning on this spectrum re-allocation to favor Differential G-P-S.

As we go to air Dutch telecommunications regulator has halted amateur D-Star repeater licensing until the frequency shift can be made.

Impact on European satellite operations would be immediate. A ripple effect on world wide ham radio satellite communications would at least in theory be inevitable. So might be formal complaints to the International Telecommunications Union from spectrum regulators in neighboring nations.

>From Scottsdale, Arizona, I'm Norm Seeley, KI7UP, reporting for the Amateur Radio Newsline.

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Even more ominous is the potential for the door to be opened for future infringement on satellite operations in other countries. This is because in many parts of the world portions of the 70cm band is allocated ham radio operators as secondary users. (Amsat-NA, PE1HZG, Southgate)

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EMCOMM VS PECUNIARY INTEREST: WB6NOA REPORTS THE FALLOUT

Ham radio educator and emergency communications expert Gordon West, WB6NOA, is weighing in on the growing controversy that is pitting proponents of providing ham radio communications while on the job versus the FCC position that any communications by any ham who is at work, off work, or even on a lunch break and being paid is illegal. The problem says West is that the FCC deems as not legal is for paid personnel conducting a ham radio net. This he says is driving away all forms of amateur radio volunteers from public service and he has thrown his political weight in with those who are calling for the FCC to continue to work with the ham community as the two work together to find a solution. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, has more:

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According to Gordon West, WB6NOA, the sky is literally beginning to fall. And its falling in on amateur radio participation in emergency communications activities.

In an e-mail to Amateur Radio Newsline, West notes that in recent days he has heard directly from a growing number of hams who were associated with emergency service operations. Hams who are simply walking away from the hobby and from emergency communications work within it. To quote WB6NOA:

"Today , I had calls from a Red Cross chapter indicating they may no longer participate or encourage American Red Cross ham radio training nets . A Red Cross staff member who is a ham, says he is out .

"Another call from a fire department ham who just formed a ham radio disaster communications team. He says he is over and out working with ham volunteers over the air .

"Ans a CERT City coordinator, also a ham, has called it quits for over the air disaster drills on 2 meter simplex."

West notes that as with emergency communicators with ARES and RACES, there is usually a ham or two on staff of various agencies that other ham volunteers work with on the air. He says that all radio amateurs fully understand the rules on pecuniary interest, but without hams embedded in agency staffs who operate in drills and disaster preparation, that ham radio has no one to serve.

In addition to being an acclaimed amateur radio instructor, Gordon West, WB6NOA, is an ARRL District Emergency Coordinator. He is also active with his Red Cross chapter and runs a daily preparedness net on 40 meters. And now he is asking the FCC for its opinion on how volunteers can best work with fellow hams who may be on staff with their local agency and who are wanting to legally run nets for disaster relief training and preparedness.

West adds that he is hoping that the FCC rules enforcer Laura Smith will continue to weigh the many comments from served agencies on this important subject. He points out that both Smith and FCC rules man Bill Cross, W3TN, responded to his initial e-mail within minutes of it being sent. He says that to him this is an indication that the regulatory agency's door is open for constructive comments.

WB6NOA ends by offering his own expertise to the FCC in crafting a solution to the current dilemma. He also quotes section 97.1(a) of the Commissions own rules. A rule which not only defines the reason ham radio exists but recognizes and specifically spells out the value of the amateur service to the public. This, as a voluntary noncommercial communication service, particularly with respect to providing emergency communications.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, Im Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in the Amateur Radio Newsline studio in Los Angeles.

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Gordon West says that this bru-ha-ha has just undone all that hams have been trying to do to find a purpose, with their local County or City emergency services. He adds that this controversy has likely set back the cause of ham radio emergency preparedness, growth, and cooperation between volunteers and the various agencies that they serve. (ARNewsline(tm))

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PUBLIC SERVICE: SOUTH AFRICAN HAMNET ASSISTS THE WALK AGAINST CRIME

Ham radio recently played a part in a South African Walk Against Crime. The event was organized by Edenvale SAPS and Mumba Security in conjunction with the amateur radio group Hamnet.

ZR6DAN, ZU6TAN, and ZS6SKY, handled all the communications at the event. ZS6ZS, was in contact with them from a base station for back up communications in the event it was needed. The event is organized to test the readiness of the members and the ability to deploy and activate mobile and field stations while under pressure. This, in preparation for future events.   (Southgate)

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BREAK 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the DeKalb City ARES net on the WA9CJN repeater serving DeKalb, Illinois.

(5 sec pause here)

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RESCUE RADIO: GRANT MONEY BRINGS WINLINK SYSTEM TO OREGON

A follow up to the story on a grant of $250,000 made a year and a half ago to the Amateur Radio Emergency Service in Oregon by Governor Ted Kulongoski. As a result, Oregon ARES members are on the verge of completing the state-wide installation of a Winlink ham radio emergency messaging system.

According to the ARRL, the story goes back to 2007. That's when governor Kulongoski impressed by the ability of radio amateurs to handle emergency communications when severe winter storms wreaked havoc on Oregon's North Coast. The city of Vernonia was flooded. The 911 emergency response services along with the Internet and phone service was inoperable for an extended period of time.

Because of the service rendered by Amateur Radio operators in providing communications support, the governor allocated funds for the installation of a ham radio digital communications system. One that would integrate Amateur Radio with the Internet.

Winlink was chosen over any other digital messaging system because of its performance during the severe weather two years ago. In fact it was Winlink that was the only mode of communications for several Oregon counties for the first two days of the storm. The project is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2009 ARRL Simulated Emergency Test scheduled for October 3rd and 4th.   (ARRL)

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PUBLIC SERVICE: HAMS NEEDED FOR OREGON'S EAGLE CAP EXTREME DOG RACE

Still in Oregon, that sates Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race in need of ham radio volunteers from January 13th to the 16th 2010. This, to provide communications support for the event.

About 40 to 50 radio amateurs will be needed to provide checkpoint and course safety coverage using 2 meters and a dedicated repeater for the event. The race begins at Wallowa State Park and ends at the Ferguson Ski Area and is a qualifying event for both the Alaskan Iditarod and Canadian Yukon Quest events.

Hams who enjoy performing public service work outdoors in the winter

should contact Clyde Raymer, Jr., KL0CW, by e-mail to president (at) eaglecapextreme (dot) com. More on the race and the part played by volunteer radio amateurs is on-line at www.eaglecapextreme.com/amateurradio.php (Via E-Mail)

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RESCUE RADIO: SOME SOCAL REPEATER SITES MAY NOT BE REACHABLE THIS WINTER

Hams with repeaters atop several Southern California hilltops may not be able to reach them this winter if repairs are needed. This, the result of the aftermath of a massive wildfire which is still only 85 percent contained.

Michael Mcintyre is a District Ranger who oversees the Angeles National Forest. In a letter to all permit holders Mcintyre writes that as a result of the Station Fire much of the District has been burned with complete mountain sides reduced to ash and charred remains of trees. The Angeles National Forest remains closed south and east of California State Route 14 and Route 138 until further notice.

Mcintyre says that individuals or organizations holding special uses permits for sanctioned activities within the forest are exempt from this closure. However, weather forecasters predict that Southern California will receive heavy rain this fall. This he says may result in landslides, flooding, and road washouts. Numerous roads would be closed and many communication systems and utilities across the forest might be non operational.

Mcintyre says that now is the time for lessees to organize carpools by coordinating tenant needs and planning helicopter access for when access roads are washed out. He adds that it is prudent to make back up plans with your neighbors to ensure your long term access where sanctioned activities are necessary.

While Mcintyre does not address the needs of ham radio repeater owners, its well known that a good number of wide coverage systems operate from such hilltops as Mt. Disappointment, Mt. Lukens and of coarse Mt. Wilson. And if the prediction of heavy rain later this year is correct, if a repeater goes off the air due to some failure, it may have to stay off unless its owner has the money to pay for a chopper ride up to the site. (CGC)

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RADIO VANDALISM: TWO MORE RADIO TOWERS COME DOWN

Two more broadcast radio towers have been felled. Thais, since radicals in the Pacific Northwest toppled two towers owned by KRKO in Everett Washington as we reported last week.

The first involves WEAB in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Radio World says that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is trying to find out who cut the guy wires of the stations 350-foot tower causing it to fall to the

ground. The Clear Channel tower is one of five in the same location of Whitehall Township. Authorities as saying no one was injured and no other property was damaged in the incident. The station operates at 790 kHz, went on the air in 1949. Its on the air with its remaining towers.

There's no mystery to why the 400 foot tower for of WTJV AM in Deland, Florida fell. A local newspaper says that truck full of high school students snagged one of the guy wires on its bumper after a high school football game. No one was injured, even though the tower and a power line fell. The station operate on 1490 kHz serves the Daytona Beach area. (RW, others)

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ENFORCEMENT: UNLICENSED BROADCASTER DINGED $10000

The FCC has ordered Texas resident Radhames Severino to pay a $10,000 fine. This for allegedly operating of an unlicensed radio transmitter on the frequency 101.5 MHz in the Houston area. Newsline's Bruce, Tennant, K6PZW, has the details:

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In its order affirming the forfeiture the FCC noted that on May 26th the Commission's Houston Resident Agent Office of the Enforcement Bureau had issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture in the amount of $10,000 to Severino for the alleged offense. To date, Severino has not filed a response to the order.

This case dates back to On October 23 and 25, 2006. That's when the FCC responded to a complaint about an unlicensed radio station in the Houston area. An agent from the Commission's Houston Office T-hunted the signal on 101.5 MHz to a building in the Houston area. On October 31, 2006, an agent from the Houston Office inspected the radio station located in suites K-M of the building, which was labeled as the home of the Iglesia Misionera Evangelistica Elohim church. The agent determined that Severino leased these suites, was responsible for the station, and was the pastor for the church.

On November 7, 2006, the Houston Office sent a formal Notice of Unlicensed Operation to Severino at his residence. The notice warned him that operation of an unlicensed radio station violated Section 301 of the Act and directed him to cease all unlicensed operations immediately. The letter also outlined the potential penalties for such a violation,.

But the FCC warning to Severino apparently went unheeded. On January 30, March 12, and October 15, 2008, agents from the Houston Office, again T-hunted the signal on 101.5 MHz to Severino leased suites. This in turn lead to the issuance of a $10,000 Notice of Apparent Liability to Severino to which he never responded. As a result, Severino was given the customary 30 days to pay or to file an appeal.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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This 30 day period has no passed but the FCC has not said if the fine was paid or is still outstanding. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC ISSUES $19000 EAS VIOLATION FINE

The Federal Communications Commission fined Opp Educational Broadcasting Foundation, licensee of WJIF FM in Alabama, a $19,000. This, for violations of the rules governing a stations responsibility to the community it serves in time of emergency under the Emergency Alert or EAS system. The alleged violations include failing to maintain operable E-A-S equipment, not conducting required EAS tests and not providing certain information to Enforcement Bureau questions.

This case goes back to 2008 when the FCC responded to a complaint alleging WJIF did not take part in E-A-S drills and had never transmitted an EAS test. In its investigation the FCC specifically asked the station to provide copies of station E-A-S procedures and logs recording EAS test transmissions. The FCC followed up in March and warned WJIF that not responding appropriately could lead to enforcement action.

In its December 2008 response, the WJIF management did not directly answer the questions, except to state in general terms that WJIF had participated in EAS in the past. However it also noted that EAS gear was broken and the station intended to fix it as soon as possible. (FCC)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO LAW: NSC SAYS OPERATING TWO WAY MOBILE IS SAFE

The National Safety Council says that operating mobile does not appear to increase the risk of having an accident.

In response to a request from the ARRL, National Safety Council President Janet Froetscher wrote back that the group has no evidence that using two-way radios while driving poses significant crash risks. She said that until such time as compelling, peer-reviewed scientific research is presented that denotes significant risks associated with the use of amateur radios, two-way radios or other communication

devices that her organization does not support legislative bans or prohibition on their use.

The ARRL had written to the National Safety Council out of concern over the numerous state and city laws being enacted to ban all but hands free cellphone and stop all texting by the general public. The fear has been that some of these laws are so broadly worded that they might be interpreted by law enforcement or courts as a ban on all forms of vehicular communications.

While Froetscher comments do not carry the power of law, they will be an essential tool that hams can use to obtain exclusions from proposed mobile communications bans by cities or states. This is because the National Safety Council's findings carry a lot of weight with lawmakers at all levels of government. (ARRL)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: ELLISON NAMED CHIEF OF FCC ENFORCEMENT BUREAU

New FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski has announced the appointment of P. Michele Ellison as Chief of the Enforcement Bureau effective September 28th. Ellison is currently Deputy General Counsel of the Enforcement Bureau. According to an FCC press release she most recently served as Acting General Counsel of the FCC. Her appointment will likely have little impact on rules enforcement in amateur radio which was recently handed over to Laura Smith. (FCC)

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WHATS IN A NAME: CAD AND ASTATIC REBRAND AS CAD AUDIO

Some say what's in a name? A lot if you are CAD Professional Microphones and Astatic Commercial Audio Products which are re-branding as C-A-D Audio.

While the name CAD Professional Microphones may not be one familiar to hams, the Astatic brand has its roots in amateur radio. The company was established in 1931 by two radio engineers dedicated to the development of a static-free, or "anti static," microphone.

Over the years the company evolved into Astatic Commercial Audio products. Perhaps its most famous Astatic branded product was the lollypop looking D-104 crystal microphone that was considered the gold standard for two way radio in the 1950', 60's and through the mid-1970's. That D-104 was discontinued from production about a decade ago. The name change for the Solon, Ohio, company became effective on September 1st. (Via E-Mail)

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WHATS IN A NAME: RAC SAYS HDBOC NOW THE LF/MF/HFBPC

And another what's in a name? How about the Board of Directors of Radio Amateurs of Canada approving a motion to change the name of its High Frequency or HF Band Planning Committee to the Low Frequency,

Medium Frequency and High Frequency Band Planning Committee.

Radio Amateurs of Canada says that the change name better reflects the range of frequencies that the committee is responsible for. Jim Fisher, VE1JF, who is the Committee Chair indicates that the work the committee members are doing will not change much as they were already including those bands in their ongoing reviews.

And thankfully, Radio Amateurs of Canada has come up with an acronym for the newly renamed group. They call it the LF/MF/HFBPC. (RAC)

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HAM BUSINESS: RF CONCEPTS LLC BUYS ALPHA RADIO PRODUCTS

RF Concepts, LLC, has acquired the assets of Alpha Radio Products and will manufacture the world famous amplifiers and other Alpha Radio products. Michael Seedman, AA6DY, is the Chairman RFConcepts, LLC. He says that the Alpha 9500 and 8410 amplifiers, the Model 2100 Dummy Load/Wattmeter combo and line of 4500 Wattmeters will continue to be manufactured and available. Also the new company will honor existing customer commitments, including warranties, customer and technical support, and repairs. It will also keep an extensive parts inventories to support the more than 10,000 Alpha amplifiers in the market. (RFConcepts, LLC)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: TAPR-ARRL DCC SEPT 25 - 27 IN CHICAGO

The joint ARRL and TAPR Digital Communications Conference will be held on September 25th to the 27th, The event takes place in the northwest suburbs of Chicago at the Elk Grove Village Holiday Inn near O'Hare airport with a free hotel shuttle bus.

The Digital Communications Conference features 2 full days of Technical forums that includes such topics as Digital Amateur Television, the use of digital Communications at the Marine Corps Marathon and the recently reported Universal Ham Radio Text Messaging initiative as proposed by Bob Bruninga, WB4APR.

If you can't be there in person you can follow activities on Twitter at twitter dot org slash taprdigital. More on the conference is on line at www.tapr.org. (WB9QZB)

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FUTURE PROPAGATION: NOAA PREDICTS A SOLAR MAX OF ONLY 90

The U.S. Dept. of Commerce Space Weather Prediction Center has issued a prediction that the next Solar maximum will take place in May 2013 with a predicted sunspot count of just 90. This prediction follows on from other gloomy forecasts from various sources.

However, it must be remembered that scientists knows next to nothing about the suns behavior. Data from solar observing satellites goes

back barely 3 decades and visual recordings of sunspot data only extends over a few centuries. Either way, this latest prediction can be seen at the website found at www.swpc.noaa.gov/ftpdir/weekly/Predict.txt (NOAA)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: 4 MICROSATS TO LAUNCH SEPT 23

Turning to ham radio in space, the ISIS Launch Services weblog says a l date of September 23rd is currently likely for the Indian PSLV-C14 launcher that will carry 4 Amateur Radio CubeSats into orbit. These tiny birds include SwissCube, BeeSat and two others. More information is at blog.isilaunch.com. (Southgate)

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ON THE AIR: COMMEMORATING PIERRE CURIE

On the air, keep an ear open for the fascinating call TM150RPC. Its on the air to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of physician and Nobel Prize laureate Pierre Curie.

For those of you not aware, Pierre Curie was a French physicist, a pioneer in crystallography, magnetism, piezoelectricity and radioactivity. In 1903 he received the Nobel Prize in Physics with his wife, Maria Skï¿½odowska-Curie, and Henri Becquerel, in recognition of the extraordinary services they have rendered by their joint researches on the radiation phenomena discovered by Becquerel. That discovery is more commonly known as the X-Ray.

You can listen out for TM150RP-C on all bands and modes. QSL's go via F5KAZ. (OPDX)

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DX

In D-X, word that Members of the Russian Robinson Club and the R-Quad Antenna Company have put together a DXpedition project to activate the rarest Islands on the Air references in Vietnam. Operators mentioned are RA3NAN, RK3FA, RZ3EM and UA6BGB. They will be in Vietnam between September 24th and October 2nd. For more details and updates, please visit xv6rrc.com.

And lastly, M0OVL will be on the air slash P on September 25th and 26th from Inner Farne, He is restricted to just 4 hours of operations each day between 1000 and 1400UTC and is also dependent on weather conditions.   More information and QSL routing is at www dot m-zero-o-v-l dot co dot uk.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Fred Vobbe, W8HDU, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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